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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the process of learning to write in a second language (L2) looks at how theory and research on first language (L1) composition and L2 acquisition influence the study of L2 composition. Three perspectives are examined: (1) the approach to writing that focuses on the text itself, including comparison of native L1 and L2 rhetorical patterns; (2) the internal, psychological composing processes in skilled and unskilled writers; and (3) the social, external context of language use and conventions of various discourse types. It is concluded that research in both L1 and L2 composition leaves questions about how one actually learns to write, and that the conclusions that have been reached about what unskilled writers need to do to become skilled writers are not self-evident. In addition, it is argued that because language is both social and psychological, isolating the two gives an incomplete idea of L2 composition, and that the two should be integrated in teaching if not in research. Suggestions for future research into L2 writing include longitudinal studies into how individuals become good writers and further examination of both internal and external variables in writing. A 45-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

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Three Perspectives on Composing in a Second Language

VICTORIA COBB

INTRODUCTION

Theory and research in second-language composition is influenced by theory and research in both first-language (L1) composition and second language (L2) acquisition/learning. In "Nonacademic Writing: The Social Perspective" (Faigley, 1985), Faigley identifies three perspectives for writing research: the text perspective, the individual perspective and the social perspective. Similarly, L2 acquisition/learning research focuses alternately on the language system to be learned, the individual learner, or language used in context. Both these fields seem to have developed along roughly similar lines over the past thirty years, reflecting developments in linguistic theory (although not always directly) in shifting from a focus on the text or linguistic system to either a focus on the individual's tacit knowledge or a focus on the social function of language. In this paper the development of L2 composition is traced in light of developments in these related fields. It is argued that, although there may be good reasons for limiting one's theoretical or research perspective, teaching practice requires attention to all these elements since all play a role in our use of language.

TEXT PERSPECTIVE

As Saussure says in his Course in General Linguistics, language "has its seat in the brain". Unfortunately, it is impossible to see language in the brain, and thus we must find other ways to investigate it. One method is to limit the investigation to an examination of the physical manifestation of a language (i.e., the utterances produced by speakers of the language). This data-based methodology was the methodology employed by American structuralist linguistics from the 1930s to the 1950s. Implicit to this approach to the study of language is the assumption that only a

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study of the data can be objective and reliable. We cannot possibly know what happens in the mind, and thus our inquiries should be restricted to the study of directly observable behavior. Current-traditional rhetoric in composition and the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis in L2 acquisition might be said to employ similar assumptions.

The chief assumption of current-traditional rhetoric is "the Romantic conviction that the creative aspects of the process are mysterious, inscrutable, and hence unteachable"(Freedman et al., 1983). Thus according to proponents of this model, the business of teaching rhetoric must be restricted to the teaching of the formal aspects of composition. Emphasis is on the composed product rather than the unteachable composing process. Characteristic of this approach to composition teaching is the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse; and an emphasis on proper usage and style (Young, 1978). Students learn to compose by analyzing a model finished product and trying to imitate it.

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) operates under a different sort of assumption, but the resulting focus on the material to be learned rather than on the learner is similar. Adopting the behaviorist model of learning accepted by American structural linguists, the proponents of CAH believe that language learning, like other kinds of learning, is brought about by practice and reinforcement. People, like animals, can be trained to behave in a given manner. Language is a behavior. Therefore people can be trained to produce it, provided the behavior is sufficiently reinforced. *How* the human mind accomplishes the task of acquiring behaviors is not objectively knowable, and thus is not a legitimate object of study. It is sufficient to know that it does acquire them. This rather simplistic view of learning means that pedagogy is fairly simple and formulaic. The difficult part of language teaching becomes deciding *what* is to be taught, not *how*. The solution proposed by CAH was that the language learner needed to learn those aspects of the L2 that were different from the L1. Thus research needed to focus on the languages (the product), not the way people learn (the process).

The model of L2 composition that emerged at the point when these two paradigms reigned in L2 acquisition and in composition was Robert Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric. Kaplan pointed out that more was involved in writing than sentence level grammar. From examining advanced nonnative students' writing, he discovered that

often, although the grammar was correct, the compositions were next to incomprehensible. He proposed that the reason for this was that the rhetorical patterns used in the students' native language were different from the rhetorical patterns used in English, and thus there was a negative transfer from L1 composition to L2 composition (Kaplan, 1966).

The implication of contrastive rhetoric for both teaching and research was, again, an emphasis on the written product rather than on the writer.The pedagogy Kaplan proposed was in keeping with the pedagogies of the proponents of both the current-traditional rhetoric of L1 composition and the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. Students of L2 composition must be taught the rhetorical patterns of English, and "the only efficient way of accomplishing such teaching in rhetoric, just as in syntax, is by way of a series of models that are imitated and by way of a movement from absolute control to relative de-control" (Kaplan, 1968). The research methodology he recommended (and employed) to confirm his hypothesis consisted of examining the rhetorical patterns evident in traditional texts in a given language, and then studying the L2 compositions of students' from that language background to see if their native language rhetorical patterns surfaced in these L2 compositions.

Two studies performed by Kaplan lend support to his hypothesis. In one he looked at the Chinese Eight-Legged Essay, a rhetorical form which was used on the Chinese civil service examinations for five hundred years. After analyzing the form of this type of essay, he compared it to the English compositions of several native Chinese speakers. He found that the organization of these compositions resembled that of the Eight-Legged Essay more closely than that of a typical English essay (Kaplan, 1968). In the other, he found by studying the Koran that elaborate parallelism is used frequently in Arabic written discourse, while subordination is preferred in English. His examination of a composition by a native speaker of Arabic indicated that the tendency to use parallelism rather than subordination had been transferred into this writer's English compositions (Kaplan, 1967).

While the above studies support Kaplan's views, several studies contradict his hypothesis either directly or indirectly.

In their study of the writing of native speakers of Chinese, Mohan and Au-Yeung Lo (1985) contested the claim that the Eight-Legged Essay was in any way a central form in Chinese writing since the classical *wen-yan* style, of which this essay form is a part,

has now been replaced by the spoken language (*bai-hua*) style in Chinese education. They proposed that developmental factors and previous instruction influenced the compositions of their subjects more than transfer from the L1.

Doushaq (1986) compared English and Arabic compositions written by 96 Jordanian students and found that the holistic scores on the Arabic compositions were very close to the holistic scores on the English compositions, indicating that the students' ability to write in their L1 influenced their ability to write in L2. The scores for both languages were uniformly low, which Doushaq attributed to poor education in composition in the L1. Interestingly, of the four groups that Doushaq examined (one group of first-year university students in science, one of second-year English majors, one of fourth-year English majors, and one of fourth-year Arabic majors) the group that scored highest on the Arabic compositions was not the Arabic majors, but the fourth-year English majors. Doushaq proposed that this was due to a reverse transfer of the skills learned in English composition back to the students' native Arabic. This would seem to indicate that composition skills transfer positively from one language to another, rather than negatively as Kaplan hypothesized. Two other studies which compared the L1 and L2 compositions of the same subjects (Edelsky, 1982; Tetroe and Jones, 1987) also found evidence of positive transfer of writing skills from the L1 to the L2.

Positive transfer does not rule out negative transfer, but these studies do seem to indicate that negative transfer of the L1 patterns of rhetoric to writing in the L2 is not the only source of problems for L2 writers, or even the most important one. Problems might be just as likely to arise due to poor education in L1 composition as to different styles of rhetoric in the L1. While we perhaps cannot assume that students who write well in their L1 will write well in their L2, we should definitely not assume that all L2 students write well in their L1.

INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

In his article *Chomsky's Revolution in Linguistics* , John Searle draws a distinction between two views on the study of man:

> Throughout the history of the study of man there has been a fundamental opposition between those who believe that progress is to be made by a

> rigorous observation of man's actual behavior and those who believe that such observations are interesting only in so far as they reveal to us hidden and possibly fairly mysterious underlying laws that only partially and in distorted form reveal themselves to us in behavior... Noam Chomsky is unashamedly with the searchers after hidden laws. (Searle, 1972)

While those in the former category might argue that no more than a rigorous observation is objectively and scientifically possible, those in the latter category would argue that this observation in and of itself is pointless. The shift in attention from product to process in L1 composition[1] and from language to language learner in second language acquisition that occurred in the 1960s and 70s might be usefully seen in this vein. While the creative aspects of the writing process may be mysterious and inscrutable, it is precisely these aspects that are at the center of writing, and thus it is these aspects that are most worthy of study. By the same token, while a contrastive study of the language structures in the target and native languages can (apparently) be more objective than a study of how a person becomes able to communicate in a foreign language, the latter concern could be seen to be more central to language learning. In this way, the limits of what is knowable are stretched by what is worth knowing.

The "Chomskyan revolution" and work done in first language acquisition led to new lines of inquiry in second language acquisition. The contrastive analysis hypothesis was thrown into question by studies that indicated that L2 learners acquired morphemes in a particular order regardless of their native language (e.g., Dulay and Burt, 1974). This coincided with a common dissatisfaction with the results of language teaching at the time. Students who performed well in class were unable to communicate in real life situations. These practical and theoretical considerations brought about new theories of language learning which advocated paying more attention to meaning and taking into account attitudes and motivations (e.g., Krashen's Monitor Model). If students were to acquire a second language, they would have to *use* the language in a meaningful way, not just study its structure or mimic its sounds.

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[1] Cognitive psychology, the dominant influence on process models in L1 writing research, rejected Chomskyan linguistics long before such models came into existence. I am attempting to show a parallel development here rather than to suggest that any more direct relationship exists between these two fields.

The increasing number of college graduates who could not write led to a similar questioning of the underlying assumptions of the current-traditional rhetoric. As Hairston put it:

> We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand how that product came into being and why it assumed the form that it did. We have to try to understand what goes on during the internal act of writing and we have to intervene during the act of writing if we want to affect its outcome. We have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than easy thing, evaluate the tangible product (Hairston, 1982, p. 84).

Research into the writing process and attention to invention were the results of this interest in the "internal act of writing".

Determining what it is that someone does when they write is not an easy task. It is impossible to have any direct knowledge of someone else's thought processes. To get around this problem, researchers have developed various indirect methods for studying the writing process. One method is to interview people about their experience. While this can give us some information, it is not the most reliable technique because people don't necessarily remember exactly what they do and think as they write, and because their memory can be distorted by what they think they ought to have done. Another method is to have people think aloud into a tape recorder as they write. This takes care of the memory problem, but it introduces a new problem, in that it distorts the writing task itself. A third method is to observe people writing or to videotape them writing. Finally, one can simply examine the products produced in a controlled experiment, including all notes and revisions. All of these methods and combinations of them have been used to research the writing processes of native speakers.

From the results of the research, we can draw tentative conclusions about the nature of the writing process. Most studies indicate that the traditional linear prewrite, write and rewrite model of composing is flawed (e.g., Sommers, 1980; Pianko, 1979; Perl, 1979). Instead, writers seem to employ a recursive process, in which planning, writing and revising are all used throughout the writing process. Flower and Hayes (1981) use the analogy of a tool kit to describe how the different skills are used during writing; writers use "planning", "translating" and "reviewing" skills and subskills as they are needed at any point during the process. A related generalization that can be made on the basis of these studies

is that writers tend to discover what they want to say as they go along, rather than starting out with a firm plan and then executing it. For example, in one study the mean prewriting time (time before anything is written down) for a group of college freshman was found to be 1.26 minutes (Pianko, 1979).

Findings from studies of the composing processes of unskilled writers and those comparing the composing processes of unskilled writers to those of skilled and/or expert writers can help to give us an idea of what aspects of their writing process unskilled writers need to work on. While the writing processes of unskilled writers are similar to those of their skilled counterparts in many ways (Perl, 1979), there are certain interesting differences. Unskilled writers tend to make fewer changes in their writing than skilled writers, and the changes they do make are usually superficial, while the changes skilled writers make are often changes affecting meaning (Witte and Faigely, 1983; Perl, 1979; Sommers, 1980). Perl (1980) found that the unskilled writers she studied became bogged down in the mechanics of writing. Similarly, Pianko (1979) found that the traditional students she studied were more concerned with getting their ideas across, while the remedial students were more worried about mechanics and usage. From these findings, the authors of these studies conclude that successful writers seem to attend more to meaning than to form. This conclusion, they argue, supports the view that instruction in composition needs to include instruction in invention.

A problem with the conclusion that unskilled writers should be encouraged to adopt the habits of skilled writers is that the unskilled writers might be paying too much attention to mechanics not because they have formed the wrong hypotheses about what writing involves, but because they are at a developmental stage in their writing which requires them to pay attention to mechanics. Advocates of a process-oriented approach to teaching argue that there is no such stage, but longitudinal studies which might tell us something about the development of writing skills are never cited.

In L2 writing, the decline of the Contrastive Rhetoric Hypothesis and the audio-lingual method together with the changes occurring in L1 writing caused enthusiasm for Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric to wane. If students need to use language meaningfully in speaking, they need to do so just as badly in writing, and the excessive attention paid to form is just as out of place in the ESL composition as it is in a four skills class. Watson (1982) decried the use of models in the ESL writing class, pointing out that typically

analysis and imitation of models leads to flat, boring prose and gives the student the impression that grammaticality is more important than the content of what they write. Taylor (1981) and Zamel (1982) emphasized the similarities between L1 and L2 writing, suggesting that L2 writers, like L1 writers, "use language as a tool to discover and clarify meaning" (Taylor, p.6). They advocated concentrating on the process rather than on the product, emphasizing invention, and assigning writing topics that engaged the student's personality.

Not many studies in L2 composing processes have been performed, but those that have been have employed similar methodologies to research in L1 composing. In general the findings of these studies have been similar to the findings of L1 studies as well.

Zamel's 1983 study found that the composing processes of six advanced ESL students were recursive in nature just like the process noted in L1 studies. Moreover, the same sorts of differences between skilled and unskilled writers were observed. While the skilled writers changed meaning in revising, the least skilled writer made very few such changes. Instead, she paid attention to surface level considerations, allowing these to disrupt the flow of her writing, like the unskilled writers in Perl's study. Jones's study of the composing processes of a monitor overuser and a monitor underuser indicated that while both writers had the same number of grammatical errors in the finished product, the overuser's composition was more disjointed because she had paused so frequently while composing and had concentrated on grammatical details rather than on the whole piece. This study suggests that too much attention to the mechanics of writing is detrimental in L1 and L2 alike. Jones and Tetroe's study (1987) comparing the planning part of the composing processes of subjects writing in both their L1 and L2 found that the subjects used the same planning strategies in their L1 as they did in their L2, but when they were writing in L2, they had trouble completing the planning they were able to complete in L1.

While these similarities have been noted, Raimes (1985) warns against drawing too many parallels between L1 and L2 writing processes prematurely. Given the limited number of studies published, it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions about similarities between L1 and L2 writing processes. But regardless of the specific differences and similarities between the two, there are certain pedagogical implications of the L2 research. For example, if skilled ESL writers attend to meaning before mechanics, teachers

should encourage their unskilled student writers to do likewise so that they may become skilled. Thus, comments on papers that address only the grammatical errors are likely to be counter-productive. Similarly, if better writers revise more and make more substantial revisions, poor students need to learn how to revise more effectively. A course which required students to hand things in once and be graded might, therefore, be less effective than a course requiring multiple drafts, thereby allowing the teacher to work with the student on the revision. Finally, if writing is the process of discovering meaning, we must encourage our students to explore their ideas rather than asking them to indicate models.

While studies of the writing process might imply that certain changes are in order, none of them have provided much insight into the *development* of the writing process. Thus while we may have some idea of what unskilled or inexperienced writers ought to be aiming at, research tell us little about what the most successful ways to get there are, about how skilled writers *become* skilled writers. Thus the studies can do no more than imply. In this way the focus on the process is similar to the focus on the product. On the basis of the difference between what a person knows and what the person needs to know, assumptions are made about how people learn. If one focuses on the product, the difference between the product the learner produces and the product successful writers produce is the basis of certain assumptions; if one looks at the process the difference between how the learner behaves and how successful writers behave is the basis of others. Neither line of research really informs us about what goes on from the time the learner sets out to achieve the goal and the time s/he achieves it—i.e., about learning.

SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

At the same time that Chomsky's theory of syntax was revolutionizing linguistics, philosophers of language like Austin and Searle were developing Speech Act Theory. The main contention of this theory was that language does not just convey propositional content, it does things. for example, if I say "I will" during my marriage ceremony, I am not only saying something with my utterance, I am doing something (namely, marrying someone). The fact that "I will" has this particular effect is due to the context within which it is uttered and the social conventions which pertain in that context. Speech Act Theories are interested in how language

functions in context, thus they can be said to be interested in the external, conventional aspects of language rather than the internal, psychological aspects of language.

Sociolinguists were also interested in these external aspects of language. Michael Halliday distinguishes between "intra-organism" and "inter-organism" perspectives on the study of language (Halliday, 1978). The former is concerned with language as knowledge, while the latter is concerned with language as social behavior and is the focus of sociolinguists. These different perspectives lead to different areas of investigation. For example, sociolinguists would be interested in pursuing a functional approach to language development rather than a psychological one. Thus the question that would concern them would not be one such as "which morphemes does a child acquire first?" but rather "what are the functions that language serves in the life of the infant?" (Halliday, 1978, p. 18).

The dichotomy might be used to describe categories of critics of traditional approaches to language teaching. Those who focus on the intra-organism, psychological aspects of language might adopt theories such as Krashen's monitor model, while those who focus on the inter-organism, functional aspects of language might adopt the notional-functional approach. Critics of the current-traditional rhetoric in L1 writing have been divided along similar lines. Bizell (1982) distinguishes between "inner-directed theorists" and "outer-directed theorists". The first group is concerned with the "universal, fundamental structures of thought and language" and with pedagogy that facilitates the acquisition of necessary skills. The second group is concerned with "the social processes whereby language learning and thinking capacities are shaped and used by particular communities." Their pedagogy focuses on demystifying these conventions. Those who focus on the writing process belong to the first group. Those who belong to the second group are concerned with the circumstances under which writing comes into being and with how writing is affected by these circumstances. The two groups are not mutually exclusive in any way, but they do represent different vantage points from which to view the problem. The inner-directed perspective was addressed in the previous section of this paper. I will now turn to the outer-directed perspective.

The notional-functional approach and special purpose language teaching look at students' language learning needs in terms of the situations for which the students will need the language. The proponents of these approaches criticize traditional approaches to

language teaching not so much for their methods as for their content. The problem with traditional approaches is that they fail to take into account the pragmatic aspects of communication. The ability to communicate involves more than the knowledge of the structure of the language; one has to know how these structures function in the target language community as well. So primary are the functions that language performs, according to this group, that it is these functions that should determine the language teaching syllabus. Thus when planning a syllabus one should not ask what the student should *know* at the end of this course, but what the student should be able to *do* at the end of this course. The answer should be based on what the student wants or needs to be able to do in the target language.

Research in this area has focused on both language and the learner in different ways from those mentioned earlier. Instead of focusing on the structure of the language, it has focused on how languages allow speakers to perform certain functions. And instead of concentrating on how learners get a second language, it concentrates on what in particular it is that each learner or group of learners is trying to get. Thus, register analyses and the classification of functions make up a large part of the work done in this area.

In L1 composition the outer-directed theorists look at students needs in a similar way, although perhaps not so exclusively. For example, Mike Rose criticizes traditional remedial writing classes not only for not paying attention to the process of writing, but also for not assigning work that is similar to the work that they will actually have to do in their university classes. He studied 445 essay and take-home examination questions and he found that all called for either exposition or academic argument. None called for writing from personal experience or narrative, which are the most common types of assignment in the traditional remedial writing class. It could thus be argued that these classes do not prepare their students for the *kind of* writing they will be required to do.

In addition to what sorts of assignments students will face in the university and what sorts of skills these tasks will require, one should also consider what sort of discourse is acceptable in a university community. In his article "Inventing the University" Bartholomae argues that adapting to university discourse is one of the most difficult tasks the beginning college writer has to face. The student is required not to find his/her own voice in learning to write, but rather to appropriate (or, put somewhat more cynically, to be

appropriated by) a specialized discourse. Membership in the university community requires a knowledge of the language used by that community. It is not sufficient for the student to write grammatically correct, coherent essays; student writing has to *sound* like academic writing as well.

In the area of L2 writing, Horowitz (1986) criticizes the process-oriented approach to teaching ESL composition[1] for its "almost exclusive emphasis on the psycholinguistic, cognitive, and affective variables". He claims it "has failed to take into account the many forces outside of an individual writers control which define, shape, and ultimately judge a piece of writing" (p. 446). He identifies two main areas for research into the external aspects of academic writing: research on "genre", or the particular discourses of different fields, and research on the kind of assignments students will need to complete during their tenure at the university. It is this second kind of research that Horowitz himself conducted. He collected 54 assignments from 17 departments. What all these assignments had in common was the controlled nature of the task assigned. On the basis of his research. he concludes that "the academic writer's task is not to create personal meaning, but to find, organize, and present data according to fairly explicit instructions (455)."

Research into features of discourse typical of different academic and professional specializations is abundant in the journals devoted to English for Specific Purposes. Examples of such research include Master's study of the use of generic definite article in Scientific American (1987) and Swale's work on scholarly introductions (1983). These studies focus on the conventions of specific kinds of discourse. A teacher who knows these conventions, it is argued, can help his/her students conform to them, and such conformity is necessary to the students' success in their chosen profession.

The concern expressed by Rose, Bartholomae, Horowitz and Swales with how topic and audience might affect writing is not antithetical to a concern with the writing process. However, it does seem to contradict the views of some proponents of the process approach. For example, among the implications of teaching process rather than product, Murray includes items like the following: "The text of the writing course is the student's own writing"; "It is the

[1]Horowitz does not specify whose recommendations for applying research findings he is criticizing, but from the criticisms he makes, he is probably referring to Zamel, Spack and /or Raimes.

responsibility of the student to explore his own world with his own language,"; and "the process which produces 'creative' and 'functional' writing is the same". Thus we can see that while for Rose and Bartholomae at least part of learning how to write is learning how to conform to conventions imposed by certain audiences and/or tasks, Murray's assumption is that the writing process is an unchanging entity that can be applied to any task.

Most of the process studies cited above involved controlled experiments using college students as subjects. The topics subjects wrote about were mainly general interest topics. The unstated assumption of these studies is the same as Murray's, namely, that there is *a* writing process which remains the same regardless of external variables. In order to see whether this sort of assumption was a valid one, Selzer (1983) studied the composing processes of an engineer. He found that, unlike the recursive process observed in the other studies, the writing process of this engineer was clearly linear. In addition, although his subject was a skilled writer, he spent very little time revising and the changes he made were mostly superficial. While this study is very limited, it does suggest that writing processes may vary according to the kind of writing being done. Another possible variable is the writer's familiarity with the topic being written about. McCutchen (1986) compared compositions by students who knew about the topic written on with those by students who had less knowledge on the topic and found that the students who were familiar with the topic wrote compositions that were far more cohesive than the compositions of the other group. Witte and Faigely (1983) studied writers and their revisions in a variety of situations and concluded that:

> The volume and types of revision changes are dependent upon a number of variables besides the skill of the writer. These variables might be called *external variables* for composing. Included among situational variables are the following: the reason why the text is being written, the format, the medium, the genre, the writer's familiarity with the audience, the projected level of formality, and the length of the task and the projected text. So important are these variables that writing skill might be defined in part as the ability to respond to them (p. 411).

Similar studies in L2 composition have not been performed, but Christine Parkhurst (1988) interviewed native and nonnative scientists who had published in their field to determine if there were differences between the writing processes of these two groups and

between scientists and non-scientists. She found that there were. for example, because scientific topics are predetermined (e.g., writing a report on an experiment), prewriting (invention) activities such as brainstorming are generally unnecessary. She found differences between native and nonnative speakers' processes as well. The nonnative speakers interviewed tended to start with an elaborate plan which they generally stuck to as they went along. They made few revisions between the first and second drafts. Native speakers started with less elaborate plans and relied more on feedback from their colleagues in revising their work. Both groups said that the single most important factor in learning to write scientific discourse was to read widely in their field.

In her article *Different products, Different processes: A Theory About Writing*, Maxine Hairston distinguishes between three "classes" of writing. Class 1 writing consists of brief, everyday sorts of writing: notes, shopping lists, short memos, etc. Class 2 writing she calls "self-limiting" writing. The writer knows what s/he is going to write before the writing is begun. Examples of this kind of writing includes research papers, technical papers and lab reports. The third class of writing is what she calls "reflective" writing. It is while doing this sort of writing that a writer discovers meaning as s/he writes. Given the studies cited above, it seems very likely that there are at least three kinds of writing and three kinds of writing processes.

In conclusion, attention to the external situations that affect writing need not be contradictory to attention to the internal aspects of writing. It seems quite evident that both play a role. More research (and more comprehensive research) into the nature of the writing processes of people writing in different settings need to be done. Studies of how audience, topic and specialized discourse affect writing should not be restricted to the written product any more than studies of the writing processes should be restricted to one kind of writing. After all, language is both psychological and social, universal and conventional. We cannot look at half of the picture and expect to see the whole.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to show how broad concerns about the nature of language and how language can be studied can shed light on research in the areas of L1 composition and L2 acquisition, and

how these two fields in turn influence the study of L2 composition. By standing back from the issues, one is able to gain a broader perspective on them.

The literature reviewed here leads to several conclusions about the research which has thus far been conducted in the area of L2 composition and the related fields of L1 composition and L2 acquisition. First, research in both L1 and L2 composition leaves us with questions about how one actually learns to write. Second, the conclusions reached on the basis of the differences between skilled and unskilled writers concerning what unskilled writers need to do are not self-evident. Finally, language is both social and psychological, and isolating the social from the psychological can only give us an incomplete idea of L2 composition or any other linguistic phenomenon. While the separation of the two might be justified for the purposes of study, it is important that we reunite the two aspects in teaching, since both contribute to our students' success or failure in learning to write.

Future research into L2 writing needs to include longitudinal studies which would give us some insight into how people become good writers. It also needs to examine both the internal and the external variables in writing to give us a more complete idea of how the latter affect the former and vice versa.

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